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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/932,588	08/17/2001	James T. Panttaja	018167-003800US	5221
6449	7590	06/15/2005	EXAMINER	
ROTHWELL, FIGG, ERNST & MANBECK, P.C. 1425 K STREET, N.W. SUITE 800 WASHINGTON, DC 20005			LASTRA, DANIEL	
		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	
			3622	

DATE MAILED: 06/15/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/932,588	PANTAJA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	DANIEL LASTRA	3622	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 March 2005.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-21 have been examined. Application 09/932,588 (Redemption System for Award Redemption) has a filing date 08/17/2001.

Response to Amendment

2. In response to Non Final Rejection filed 01/11/2005, the Applicant filed a Request for reconsideration on 03/23/2005.

Specification

3. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: page 8 lines 30-35 teaches "Business ID column 304 and a Promotion ID column 306". Said lines should recite "Business ID column 404 and a Promotion ID column 406". Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikeda (US 5,937,391).

As per claims 1-21, Ikeda teaches:

A method in a redemption system for determining which awards to redeem, the method comprising:

maintaining an award history database that includes award transaction information that describes awards earned by a consumer and, for each earned award, the type of award (see figure 8);

maintaining an encumbrance database that describes types of awards that cannot be redeemed at one or more suppliers (see figure 9). Applicant's specification page 13 teaches "encumbrance of awards is measured in terms of restrictions on redeeming the awards at certain suppliers. Particularly, awards are encumbered if one or more suppliers will not accept them for redemption". Ikeda teaches in figures 6 and 9 that shop E (i.e. supplier) would not accept the awards points earned by customers in other stores. Also, Ikeda teaches in column 11, lines 24-35 "If the number of the redeeming points has not reached the value specified by the customer, then the deficit is compensated by the points accumulated for other shops from the oldest points in step S41. The redeeming points are computed at the points redeeming ratio common to all shops in the online shopping mall. Then, in step S42, the redeeming points adjusting process is performed between other shops, and the process terminates. When the points accumulated for other shops are used in redeeming points, the points redeeming ratio specifically set for the current shop, not the common ratio in the online shopping mall, can also be applied". Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the application was made, to know that Ikeda teaches an encumbrance database that describes types of awards (i.e. points) that cannot be redeemed at one or more suppliers (i.e. points earned in shop A cannot be redeemed at shop E) and also teaches that each store would have a point redeeming ratio that would

be used to redeem points accumulated at other stores. This feature would allow customers to manage said customers' earned awards and determine which suppliers would accept said customers' awards.

Ikeda teaches receiving a request to redeem an amount of the earned awards at a chosen supplier (see figure 13);

determining allowed awards that can be redeemed with the chosen supplier (see figure 16);

determining encumbrance levels of the allowed awards based on the types of allowed awards and the data in the encumbrance database (see figure 16); and

determining which of the allowed awards to redeem based on the encumbrance levels (see figure 6).

As per claim 2, Ikeda teaches:

The method of claim 1 wherein determining which of the allowed awards to redeem is further based on expiration dates of the allowed awards (see figure 9 "effective term").

As per claim 3, Ikeda teaches:

The method of claim 1 wherein determining which of the allowed awards to redeem is further based on dates on which the allowed awards were earned (see figure 8, "Purchase data").

As per claims 4 and 12, Ikeda teaches:

The method of claim 1 wherein the type of award includes according to which promotion the award was earned (see figure 8, "points").

As per claims 5 and 13, Ikeda teaches:

The method of claim 1 wherein the type of award includes from which business the award was earned (see figure 8, "Name of Shop").

As per claims 6 and 14, Ikeda teaches:

The method of claim 1 wherein the type of award indicates black-out dates on which the award cannot be redeemed. However, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the application was made, to know that if the Ikeda's award system indicates expiration dates after which the prize would not be redeemed, the Ikeda's award system would also indicate black-out dates where earned points would not be accepted for redemption.

As per claims 7 and 15, Ikeda teaches:

The method of claim 1 wherein the type of award indicates a classification of the award (see figure 8, "points").

Claim 8 contains the same limitations as claims 2 and 3 therefore the same rejection is applied.

Claim 17 contains the same limitations as claims 2 and 3 therefore the same rejection is applied.

Claim 19 contains the same limitations as claims 2 and 3 therefore the same rejection is applied.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments, filed 03/23/05, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1-21 under Eggleston have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the

rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Ikeda.

Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DANIEL LASTRA whose telephone number is 571-272-6720. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, ERIC W. STAMBER can be reached on 571-272-6724. The Examiner's Right fax number is 571-273-6720.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

DC
Daniel Lastra
June 8, 2005

Yehdega Retta
RETTA YEHDEGA
PRIMARY EXAMINER